# JOAN OF ARC

J.Hart

# Dedication

À l’amour de ma vie, **Stéphanie**,
ce livre est pour toi.

# Lily of the Valley

In the silence of the morning, you rise,
a small white bell, fragile yet proud.
Your scent drifts softly through the air,
like a breath of peace no one can capture.

Each petal is a quiet promise,
a gentle light shining in the shadow.
You are discreet, yet you hold my whole heart,
a spark of purity the world cannot tarnish.

— J.Hart

# Preface

## Before the Voices

I was only a child when the world first began to whisper to me, when the fields of Domrémy seemed larger than they were, and the sky above them more alive than any I had seen before. I remember the wind brushing against my face as I tended the sheep, the scent of damp earth and wildflowers mingling with the faint, distant clamor of a world I did not yet understand. There was a stillness there, a silence that was not empty, but full of expectation, full of a promise I could not name. It was in that quiet, in those long hours beneath the sun and stars, that I felt the first stirrings of something greater than myself, something that called me forward, yet beyond comprehension.

I did not know then what awaited me, did not know that I would be spoken to by figures brighter than the sun, that I would hear voices that would shape my life and, in time, my death. All I knew was that I was restless, that the world around me seemed smaller than the world inside me, and that I could feel a purpose pressing against my heart, though I could not yet see it clearly. There was fear, yes—the kind of fear that wakes you in the night, the kind that shakes your hands and makes your knees weak—but there was also a

strange certainty, a calm beneath the trembling, that I was being watched and guided by hands I could not see.

I prayed, though I scarcely knew the words. I prayed to God in the only way I could, in whispers, in sighs, in the language of the heart, and I waited. I waited as one waits for the first spark of dawn after a long, endless night. And then, one day, the light came. Not the light of the sun, but a light that seemed to shine from everywhere at once, filling my mind, warming my soul, and illuminating figures I could not yet name. They spoke, and in their voices I felt both command and comfort, warning and love, urgency and peace. I would come to know them—Michael, Catherine, Margaret—and I would learn that their guidance would define every step I took, every choice I made, every act of courage and endurance that I would be called to perform.

Before these voices, I was a girl of Domrémy, tending sheep, tending her own small heart. After them, I would become something else entirely. I would ride into battles, speak before kings, and face death in fire. I would carry not only my life but the hope, the faith, and the courage of a nation, and the weight of this knowledge would never leave me. I write these words now to offer a path into that journey, to show how a simple child became a force both human and divine, and to remind all who read that even the smallest, quietest among us may hear a calling that cannot be ignored.

This is the story of how a girl from Domrémy became the Maid of Orléans. This is the story of faith, courage, vision, and fire. This is my story.

# Chapter 1

## The Birth of a Visionary

Joan of Arc was born around 1412 in the quiet, rustic village of Domrémy, nestled amid rolling fields in northeastern France near the border of territories controlled by the English. The village was modest, a cluster of timber cottages and thatched roofs, dirt paths winding between small plots of farmland, and a single chapel whose bell called the faithful to prayer. Her parents, Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Romée, were devout peasants who worked the land tirelessly, instilling in Joan a rigorous sense of faith and discipline from a young age. Life in Domrémy was simple and harsh, marked by the rhythms of the seasons and the quiet struggles of survival, yet it was in this humble setting that the extraordinary nature of Joan's spirit first began to reveal itself.

Even as a child, Joan was different. She was not content with play and gossip like other girls her age; she preferred solitude, often wandering into the fields to tend sheep or

sitting quietly in the chapel, lost in prayer and contemplation. It was during these solitary hours, around the age of thirteen, that Joan began experiencing visions that would shape the rest of her life. She described seeing radiant figures that appeared to her with startling clarity, as if they were truly present in the space around her. The first of these figures was Saint Michael, a warrior angel clad in shining armor, his wings spread like polished steel and a sword held firmly in his hand. His gaze was commanding, filled with both authority and expectation, and Joan felt an undeniable weight in his presence, as if the destiny of nations rested on her shoulders.

Accompanying him were Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret. Catherine was regal, adorned in white robes with a crown upon her head and a sword of brilliant light in her hand. She gestured toward Joan with a mixture of warning and instruction, urging her to prepare herself for a path that would demand courage, wisdom, and unwavering faith. Margaret appeared gentle, her expression kind yet insistent, her hands clasped in prayer as if to offer solace and strength. Joan felt the voices of these saints as distinct and real, not mere thoughts or imaginings, but audible in a way that echoed in the air around her. Their words were a mixture of soft whispers and the distant peal of bells, conveying both comfort and an urgent command. They told her that she was chosen to

save France, to protect the Dauphin Charles, and to lead armies against the English who had occupied her homeland.

These visions left Joan trembling with awe and responsibility. She fasted and prayed with growing intensity, her mind and body disciplined in ways that were unusual for a girl of her age. Her family observed her behavior with a mixture of concern, admiration, and acceptance. They marveled at her devotion and the strength of her convictions, even if they did not fully understand the depth of what she experienced. Joan’s faith, combined with these visions, created in her a courage and certainty that would sustain her through unimaginable challenges.

As the years passed, the visions became more frequent and more directive. They were not only spiritual experiences but practical guidance, shaping her understanding of the world and her role within it. The saints instructed her on how to approach the king, how to speak with authority, and even how to prepare for the journey that would take her far from Domrémy into the heart of the French court. By the age of sixteen, Joan had internalized a sense of destiny so compelling that she could no longer remain in her village. The fields of Domrémy, which had been the stage for her earliest prayers and visions, were now the starting point for a journey that would carry her to the very center of French history.

It was in the quiet of Domrémy, amid the simplicity of her family home and the endless fields under the expansive sky, that Joan of Arc first learned the weight of purpose. It was here that she first understood the voice of what she believed was God speaking to her directly, guiding her toward a mission that would demand courage beyond her years. The girl who had once prayed alone among the sheep would soon confront armies, kings, and ultimately the cruel machinery of human vengeance, armed with nothing but her faith, her visions, and an unbreakable will.

# Chapter 2

## The Call to Arms

By the time Joan of Arc reached sixteen, the weight of her visions pressed upon her with an urgency she could no longer ignore. France was a fractured land. English soldiers occupied vast swaths of territory, and the Dauphin, Charles, remained trapped in uncertainty, his authority contested and fragile. Joan’s visions had made it clear: she alone was meant to intervene. Each night, as she knelt in prayer, she saw the same radiant figures—Saint Michael with his armor gleaming in the ethereal light, Saint Catherine gesturing with the brilliance of her sword, and Saint Margaret’s gentle hands offering reassurance and guidance. They instructed her in

every detail: where to go, whom to convince, how to speak, and when to act. These were not vague suggestions but precise commands that Joan accepted with a conviction that frightened and astonished those around her.

She departed Domrémy in secrecy, leaving the familiar fields and cottages of her childhood behind. Her journey to the court of Robert de Baudricourt was long and fraught with uncertainty. As she traveled on foot through forests, over hills, and along narrow country roads, she spoke little, relying on the clarity of her visions to guide each step.

When she finally arrived at the garrison, she was met with disbelief. A peasant girl, barely sixteen, demanding an audience with the Dauphin, seemed absurd to men accustomed to dealing with nobles and knights. Yet Joan’s presence was commanding, her eyes unwavering, her voice steady despite her youth. She described her visions in meticulous detail, recounting the saints’ instructions with a fervor that made the skeptical commander uneasy.

She spoke not with the hesitance of a child but with the certainty of one who had touched the divine. After hours of deliberation, Baudricourt relented, providing her with an escort to carry her safely to the court at Chinon.

The journey to Chinon was arduous, but Joan’s resolve never wavered. She walked through villages and towns, her

armor and banner still to be acquired, her only protection the belief that the saints guided her every step. When she finally arrived, she requested an audience with Charles VII. The king, uncertain of this girl's motives and potential madness, allowed her to enter the court under close supervision. The moment she stepped into the hall, she recognized Charles immediately, as her visions had foretold.

The courtiers gasped at her certainty; how could a peasant girl know the king among so many attendants? She explained that Saint Michael and Saint Catherine had shown her his appearance and given her precise instructions on how to approach him. Charles was astonished, and although he was cautious, he sensed the authenticity and unwavering confidence in her demeanor. He granted her troops to lead, a decision that would astonish the realm and forever alter the course of the French war effort.

Joan's preparation for battle was guided as much by divine instruction as by practical strategy. She acquired armor, had a white banner sewn to display her devotion to God, and mounted a horse she would ride into battle. The soldiers, initially skeptical of a young girl commanding them, soon became inspired by her courage and conviction.

At Orléans, she arrived to find an army demoralized by months of failed attacks and the looming presence of the

English siege. The city's walls were strong, its defenders vigilant, and hope among the French troops dim. Yet Joan walked among them, speaking words of faith and determination, recounting the saints' instructions for precise points of assault. She prayed openly before each engagement, sometimes kneeling in full armor in the mud and snow, her banner held high. Her visions, which had previously guided her in solitude, now shaped the actions of entire battalions. She directed charges, encouraged wounded soldiers, and inspired men to feats of bravery they might never have imagined.

In a mere nine days, the siege of Orléans was lifted. The English, unprepared for the combination of tactical acumen, fearlessness, and almost supernatural morale of the French under Joan's leadership, were forced to retreat. Her victory was both military and symbolic. The troops began to believe that her presence carried divine favor; the idea that God had chosen a young girl to guide them emboldened their hearts and shattered the fear that had gripped them for so long.

After Orléans, Joan continued campaigns to reclaim towns along the Loire, including Jargeau, Meung-sur-Loire, and Patay. In each engagement, she reported that her saints appeared before the battles, showing her weaknesses in enemy defenses and encouraging her to act decisively. She was never a conventional commander; she led from the front,

often exposed to enemy arrows and gunfire, her prayers audible over the clamor of battle. Soldiers swore that they saw her pointing the way with her banner, sometimes appearing to anticipate attacks before they happened, as if guided by unseen eyes.

Her victories culminated in the ultimate fulfillment of her mission: guiding Charles VII to Reims for his coronation. The journey was fraught with logistical challenges, enemy attempts to intercept them, and the fear that the fragile king might falter. Yet Joan’s guidance, informed by visions she continued to experience nightly, saw them safely to the cathedral. There, the coronation was completed, and Charles VII’s legitimacy was solidified. For Joan, it was not a moment of personal triumph, but of divine obedience, the fulfillment of the mission that had been whispered to her in fields and chapels since childhood.

# Chapter 3

# Betrayal and Captivity

By 1430, Joan’s victories had made her a legend across France, a figure both revered and feared. Her presence on the battlefield had shifted the tide against the English, and yet the very fame that had protected her also made her a target. While

defending the town of Compiègne, she was ambushed by Burgundian forces, allies of the English.

The trap was set not by overwhelming numbers alone but by careful betrayal. Joan fought with her customary courage, urging her soldiers to resist, her banner flying like a beacon of divine will above the fray, but she was eventually surrounded. In the chaos, she was dismounted, captured, and forcibly taken from the battlefield. The soldiers who had once rallied around her now watched helplessly as their heroine was led away in chains, a young girl who had defied kings and armies now powerless in the hands of her captors.

Joan was transported to Rouen, the city where the English held dominion, and where her enemies had prepared a trial that would destroy her—or so they hoped. The prison into which she was thrown was a stark, cold place, damp and suffused with the odors of decay and human neglect. Her cell was small, offering little light and no comfort, the stones pressing in on all sides as though to break her spirit. She was shackled for long hours, sometimes left with only a bucket of water and a thin mattress of straw, yet even in this environment, Joan's resolve remained unbroken.

Her visions, which had guided her across battlefields and royal courts, did not abandon her. She reported seeing Saint Michael standing beside her even in darkness, his armor

gleaming in the dim cell, reminding her that she was not alone. Saint Catherine appeared to offer counsel, whispering words of legal and spiritual clarity that would guide her during interrogation. Margaret's presence was gentler, a balm to the soul, reminding her to pray and to maintain faith even as human cruelty sought to extinguish her life.

The interrogations began soon after her arrival. They were relentless, hours stretching into days, designed to test every limit of her endurance. Her captors accused her of heresy, witchcraft, and dressing as a man.

They sought to convince her that her visions were demonic illusions or lies, that her military achievements were meaningless, and that the kingdom she had fought to protect would crumble if she did not renounce her faith and her mission. They pressured her with threats, suggesting torture and even the execution of her body unless she complied. Yet Joan, guided by the voices she trusted since childhood, held firm. She answered with precision, quoting scripture, referencing canonical law, and asserting the truth of her visions.

The judges, many of whom were learned men, found themselves confounded. Her youth, intelligence, and unwavering faith made it impossible for them to dismiss her as merely naive or hysterical.

Even in captivity, Joan maintained small acts of defiance that symbolized her indomitable will. She continued to wear a semblance of armor beneath her coarse prison clothing, a silent testament to the battles she had fought and the divine guidance she still relied upon. She prayed aloud, her voice ringing clear in the stone corridors, invoking Saint Michael's courage, Saint Catherine's wisdom, and Saint Margaret's comfort. The interrogators often underestimated the psychological power of these prayers; she radiated calm and strength, even as the room filled with tension and the threat of violence.

At night, she sometimes reported that her visions visited her in brighter intensity than ever, as though the saints knew the coming days would demand the greatest courage of all. They reminded her that death, however horrifying, was not the end of her mission.

As the trial continued, it became clear that the proceedings were as much political theater as legal inquiry. Her captors sought a confession, an admission that she had deceived the French, that her voices were false, that her victories had been illusions of chance or manipulation. Joan refused at every turn. Her replies were measured, intelligent, and unwavering, demonstrating a comprehension and wisdom far beyond her years. She would not betray her God, her mission, or France. Each question posed by the court was met

with the clarity of someone whose mind and soul were aligned with a power far greater than the stone walls of her prison.

In this crucible of captivity, Joan’s character crystallized. She was no longer merely the Maid of Orléans; she had become the embodiment of unyielding faith in the face of human cruelty. Though her body was confined, her spirit remained free, carried aloft by the voices that had guided her since the fields of Domrémy. The saints that had walked with her through visions of light and prophecy now walked with her through darkness, sustaining her for the trial and for the fate that awaited in the marketplace of Rouen.

## Chapter 4

## The Fire of Martyrdom

The days in Rouen had grown long and relentless, each interrogation chipping away at any hope Joan might have held for release. Yet, in her mind, the voices of the saints never wavered. Saint Michael’s commanding presence reminded her constantly that courage was not merely physical but spiritual. Saint Catherine’s luminous figure instructed her in wisdom and composure, giving her clarity in response to the ceaseless accusations and manipulations of the court.

Margaret, gentle and steadfast, whispered consolation, bolstering her with the reminder that even in the face of mortal suffering, her soul remained unassailable. Through these visions, Joan maintained a strength that no chain, stone wall, or threat of fire could diminish.

The trial reached its dreadful conclusion in the late spring of 1431. The court, driven by political motives and determined to destroy the symbol she had become, sentenced her to death. When the sentence was read aloud, Joan remained calm. She did not cry, did not waver. She simply knelt, praying silently, her thoughts filled with the images of her guiding saints. She had known from the moment of her capture that this day might come, and in the quiet of her heart, she accepted it as part of the divine plan.

On the morning of **May 30, 1431**, she was led through the narrow streets of Rouen to the marketplace where the pyre awaited. The city’s inhabitants crowded the square, some out of fear, some out of morbid curiosity, and some in awe of the girl who had defied kings and armies.

Joan walked with dignity, her bare feet touching the cold stones, her coarse garments barely protecting her from the chill. She was bound to a tall stake, the ropes cutting into her wrists, yet she held her head high. Her eyes scanned the crowd not with fear, but with serenity and determination, as

though every gaze was a witness to the truth she had carried since the fields of Domrémy.

As the pyre was lit, flames began to creep up her feet, licking her skin, sending waves of searing pain through her body. Yet she did not scream in terror. She called aloud to Saint Michael, invoking the courage he had always embodied; to Saint Catherine, seeking the clarity and fortitude she had always provided; and to Saint Margaret, seeking the comforting embrace that had accompanied her through every trial. Her prayers rang out above the crackling of the fire and the murmur of the crowd.

She blessed those watching, offering forgiveness for her captors even as her flesh burned. Each breath she took, each movement, seemed infused with the presence of the saints who had guided her since youth.

Witnesses later described her as both consumed by agony and radiant with faith. She lifted her arms in blessing, though the fire threatened to immolate them. She spoke words of devotion, invoking the name of God and asking that France be protected, that her people be remembered, and that the truth she had lived for endure beyond her mortal body. The flames climbed higher, enveloping her completely, and yet her courage remained unshaken. When at last she fell silent, her body reduced to charred remnants, the fire consumed all

but the memory of the spirit that had burned brighter than any earthly flame. Her ashes were cast into the Seine, but Joan's legacy was beyond the reach of any river, any law, or any executioner.

Even in death, Joan's visions had sustained her. The saints that had walked with her through the quiet fields of Domrémy, the battlefields of Orléans, and the cold stone cells of Rouen had guided her to the final act of obedience, courage, and faith. She became more than a girl who had lifted sieges and inspired armies; she became a symbol of the unbreakable spirit, a beacon of divine purpose, and a testament to the power of conviction and vision.

Her story did not end with her death. Years later, in 1456, a retrial declared her innocent, officially recognizing her as a martyr. Her canonization in 1920 cemented her place among the saints. From Domrémy to Rouen, from visions in the quiet of the fields to the fiery pyre in the marketplace, Joan of Arc's life was a continuous testament to courage, faith, and divine guidance.

She had walked with saints, faced armies, challenged kings, endured betrayal, and met death with serenity and purpose. Her story endures as a reminder that one person, guided by vision and conviction, can shape the course of history.

# Chapter 5

## The Voice Across Time

If Joan of Arc were to stand in the streets of modern France, she would be both familiar and impossible to ignore. The quiet girl of Domrémy, the Maid who had walked barefoot through mud and blood, who had ridden into sieges with fire in her eyes, would now look upon cities filled with cars and towers of steel, a land transformed yet still haunted by division and fear. Her gaze would sweep across the nation, taking in the disparity, the struggles of the people, the subtle erosion of faith, and the uncertainty that has crept into hearts that once trusted in God and country alike. She would see the same France she fought for, not occupied by foreign armies this time, but by cynicism, apathy, and the quiet resignation that allows injustice and cruelty to persist.

Her message would be one of courage first and foremost. She would call upon France to remember the strength it has always possessed, to rise above petty quarrels and internal divisions, and to reclaim a sense of purpose and unity. “Do not wait for heroes,” she might say, her voice carrying the calm authority of someone who has faced the edge of death,

“for the spirit of courage lives in each of you. You are the guardians of your own land, the architects of justice, the keepers of hope.” She would remind the French people that true freedom is not merely political but moral—that the strength of a nation lies not in walls or armies, but in the integrity, bravery, and faith of its citizens.

To the faithful, her words would carry the weight of centuries of devotion and suffering. Joan would speak of God not as a distant figure but as an active presence in human lives, guiding those who are willing to listen and obey. She would urge them to pray with sincerity, to act with compassion, and to face the challenges of the modern world with the same unshakable devotion she carried into the heart of battle. “Faith is not comfort,” she would insist, “it is courage, it is action, it is the willingness to stand even when the world seeks to break you.” Her voice would ripple through churches, cathedrals, and hearts alike, a reminder that God’s guidance does not abandon those who choose to follow it with conviction.

To women, Joan’s message would be both affirmation and call to arms. She, who had been doubted, mocked, and yet elevated herself through courage and conviction, would speak directly to the power and potential within every woman. “Do not allow the world to define your strength,” she would say, eyes burning with the fire that once lit the fields of

Domrémy and the ramparts of Orléans. “Your voice matters, your decisions matter, your courage matters. History remembers those who act despite fear, who lead despite opposition, who follow truth above comfort. The battlefield is not always in armies or cities—it is in every place where injustice cries, where opportunity is denied, where faith and vision are ignored. Stand there. Be unshakable.” She would remind women that strength is not merely physical but moral, spiritual, and intellectual, and that their actions—small or great—can reshape the world, just as she had reshaped hers.

Yet her voice would not merely echo demands or exhortations; it would carry empathy and understanding. She knew fear, doubt, and suffering intimately. She would acknowledge the weight of oppression, the fatigue of those who feel powerless, the quiet despair of those who struggle to believe. And still, she would insist that courage begins not in the absence of fear but in its confrontation, that faith is strongest when tested, that the world bends not before timidity but before conviction and action.

If Joan of Arc were here today, she would remind France that its destiny has always been forged by those willing to act, to lead, and to endure. She would remind the faithful that God walks with those who persist in righteousness. She would remind women everywhere that their power is real, their voices are essential, and their courage can change history.

And she would stand, as always, unwavering, her gaze steady, her banner of faith held high, reminding the world that one person, guided by conviction and divine purpose, can illuminate the darkness, inspire the fearful, and awaken the dormant courage in the hearts of all who hear her words.

# Chapter 6

# Reflections Across Time

If Joan of Arc could look down upon the centuries she had left behind, her gaze would be steady, compassionate, and resolute. She would see the world she once sought to save, not in the smoke of burning towns or the chaos of battle, but in the subtle triumphs and failures of humanity—the nations that rose and fell, the wars that scarred the earth, the hearts that longed for justice and meaning. She would reflect on the cruelty she endured in Rouen, the flames that consumed her body, and yet she would see, with serene clarity, that her suffering had not been in vain. Every act of courage, every word spoken in faith, every vision that had guided her hand and her heart had rippled forward, touching lives she could never have imagined.

In these reflections, Joan would consider the fragile and complex nature of humanity. She would acknowledge the fear that blinds people, the doubts that paralyze them, the petty

ambitions that divide them. And yet she would also see the extraordinary potential for goodness, for courage, and for transformation. She would think of the ordinary people who, despite hardship, performed acts of bravery, compassion, and loyalty.

She would understand that the battle she had fought—once against armies and kings—was mirrored in every human struggle against injustice, against fear, against the temptation to surrender. History, she would realize, is built not only by the famous and the powerful but by the countless unseen acts of courage carried in quiet hearts.

Her thoughts would linger on faith, the invisible thread that had guided her life from the fields of Domrémy to the pyre in Rouen. Joan would marvel at the resilience of belief, at the power it gives to the weak and the courage it demands from the strong. She would see that faith is not static or ceremonial but lived, tested, and expressed through action. She would hope that people of all generations might grasp this truth: that the divine does not dwell merely in prayers or cathedrals but in the courage to act, the willingness to endure suffering, and the steadfast pursuit of what is just and good.

Joan would also dwell on women, recognizing the chains and silences imposed upon them throughout history. She would feel both sorrow and fierce pride, knowing that the

example she had set—though born of necessity, courage, and faith—had illuminated the possibility of strength, voice, and agency for women long after her death. She would remind them, across the sweep of time, that power does not always announce itself in armies or crowns. It manifests in defiance of fear, in eloquence of thought, in courage of action, and in fidelity to one's calling, no matter how the world may doubt or dismiss it.

And in her final reflections, Joan would look upon her own life with neither vanity nor regret. She would remember the exhilaration of battle, the intimacy of her visions, the quiet fields of Domrémy where the saints first spoke to her, and the fire of her martyrdom in Rouen. She would see that her life, though brief, had been filled with purpose, a singular thread woven into the vast tapestry of human history. She would recognize that her mission was not simply to win battles or to crown a king, but to show what courage, faith, and conviction could accomplish in the world. The lessons she had lived—the necessity of acting despite fear, of trusting in the unseen, of speaking truth in the face of injustice—were timeless, meant to echo long after her ashes had been scattered and her name had become legend.

Joan of Arc would conclude her reflections with a thought both tender and piercing: that human life, with all its suffering and uncertainty, carries within it the possibility of

transcendent courage. That one person, guided by faith, vision, and steadfast conviction, can shape history, inspire nations, comfort the faithful, and awaken the dormant strength in others. And though centuries have passed since her death, she would see that her story is alive, whispered in quiet prayers, carried in acts of bravery, and remembered in the hearts of those who dare to follow what they know to be right. Her life, though ended in fire, would continue—unchained, unbroken, luminous—a testament to what is possible when the spirit is unwilling to bow, when the heart dares to trust, and when courage refuses to yield.

And so, across time and space, Joan of Arc's gaze would rest not on herself, but on the living world she had touched, still whispering through history: **stand fearless, act with conviction, and let no darkness dim the flame that burns within you.**